

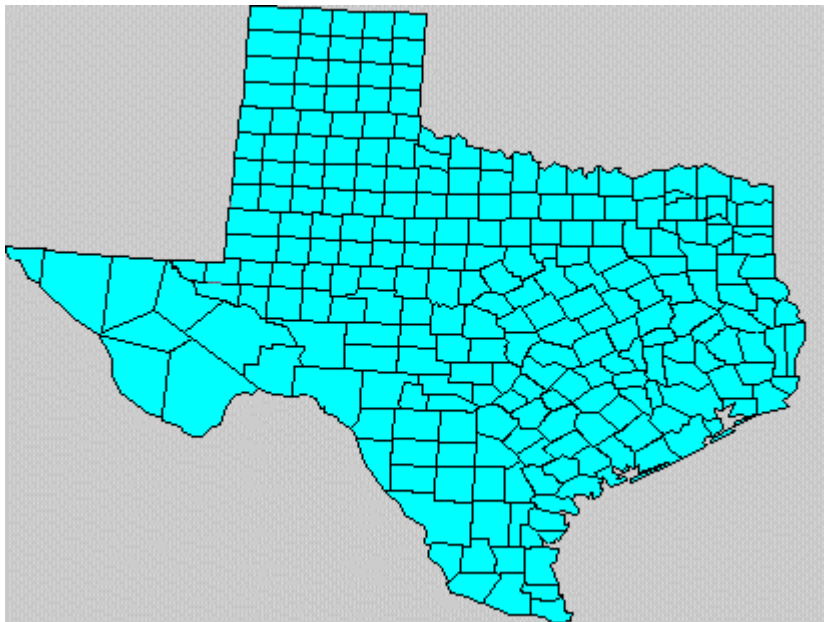
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

El Paso, TX

Profile of Drug Indicators

January 2000



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

El Paso, Texas

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, funding, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Total population: 515,342 (1990); 606,526 (1998 estimate)
- Race/Ethnicity: White 396,122; Black 17,708; American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut 2,239; Asian or Pacific Islander 5,956; Hispanic Origin 355,669
- El Paso is the 4th largest city in Texas and the 17th largest city in the United States.

Politics

- Mayor: Carlos M. Ramirez
- City Council: Jan Sumrall Rose Rodriguez, Larry Medina, John Cook, Presi Ortega, Elvia Hernandez, Luis Sarinana, Paul J. Escobar
- Chief of Police: Carlos Leon

Programs/Initiatives

- In FY 1999 ONDCP in conjunction with OJJDP awarded the West Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse \$100,000 for drug prevention under the Drug Free Communities Support Program grant.
- The West Texas HIDTA includes nine west Texas counties that adjoin the borders and points of entry into the United States.²

Participating Agencies:

Federal Agencies: Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Internal Revenue Service, Joint Task Force-6, United States Border Patrol, National Park Service, United States Attorney's Office, United States Border Patrol, United States Customs Service, United States Marshal Service, United States Secret Service.

State Agencies: Texas Attorney General's Office, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas National Guard.

Local Agencies: Alpine Police Department, Brewster County Sheriff's Office, Culberson County Sheriff's Office, El Paso County Sheriff's Office, El Paso Police Department, Hudspeth County Sheriff's Office, Presidio County Sheriff's Office.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime³

- The Crime Index Total in El Paso fell from 42,649 in 1997 to 35,787 in 1998.

The Number of Offenses Known to Police in El Paso 1996-1998

Offense	1996	1997	1998
Murder	30	24	17
Forcible rape	245	225	241
Robbery	1,195	1,066	823
Aggravated assault	3,668	3,534	3,293
Burglary	3,942	3,251	2,632
Larceny-theft	31,694	30,978	26,124
Motor vehicle theft	4,360	3,571	2,657
Arson	176	127	76
Crime Index Total	45,134	42,649	35,787

- There was a total of 3,279 drug arrests in El Paso County during 1998.

El Paso County, 1998 Arrests⁴

Offense	Arrests	% of All Arrests
DWI	3,615	4.8%
Liquor Law Violations	1,935	2.6%
Public Intoxication	1,883	2.5%
Traffic All Drugs	106	0.1%
Possession All Drugs	3,173	4.2%
Traffic Marijuana	48	--
Possession Marijuana	1,950	--
All Drug Offenses	3,279	4.3%
Violent Crimes	1,864	2.5%

Drugs⁶

- Cocaine and Crack

The supply of cocaine is reportedly increasing, while the cost is decreasing, although cocaine admissions to treatment peaked in 1995. A gram sells for \$50, and a pound for \$400-550, compared with \$2,000 per pound in the 1980's. In 1987, a hit sold for \$15; now it sells for \$10. It is usually snorted or injected, and heroin addicts often combine cocaine with heroin to inject.

- Heroin

Heroin is cheap, very pure and readily available. An ounce of heroin sells for \$1,200-1,300 in El Paso and a dose of 1/10-gram sells for \$10-20. In 1987, a hit sold for \$20 compared with 1997, when it sold for \$5-10.

A decade ago, addicts bought heroin in their barrios and only injected among family and close friends. Now, addicts purchase heroin in Cd. Juarez and inject there in shooting galleries, or in El Paso, where nonrelatives and nonclose friends have entered a formerly closed injecting society.

- **Marijuana**
Prices are consistent. An ounce sells for \$60 and a pound for \$300-450; a pound sells for as little as \$200 across the bridge in Cd. Juarez. Use of marijuana is increasing, as is the volume of marijuana shipped through El Paso.
- **Stimulants**
Crystal methamphetamine or crank use is increasing among young adults. It is manufactured locally in small-scale laboratories using ephedrine and is priced similarly to cocaine at about \$20 per dose.
- **Depressants**
Flunitrazepam has become a growing drug problem among high school youth. Easily purchased in Ciudad Juarez, it sells on the street for \$1-2 per pill.
- **El Paso County Survey Statistics⁵**
In a 1996 household survey, El Paso county respondents indicated that 66% of adults used alcohol in the past year, 25% admitted having alcohol problems, 10% admitted illicit drug use, and 6% admitted having drug problems.
Seventy-four percent of adults surveyed indicated that there is "lots of drug trafficking" in El Paso County. Forty-two percent indicated that it is "easy to get drugs."

Trafficking and Seizures

- **West Texas HIDTA:⁶**
Marijuana, cocaine and a growing heroin problem are the major threats to the region. The cities of the region are El Paso and Juarez, which have developed a huge commercial and civilian infrastructure that mask illicit drug trafficking. There are 4 major drug trafficking organizations, 20 supporting organizations, 3 gangs and 48 known money laundering operations. The estimated amount of money returned to drug source areas was reported to be over a billion dollars in FY 96. One third of all homicides have a drug connection. Aggravated assaults and kidnapping are frequently drug related.
- **El Paso Multi-Agency Task Force:⁷**
In FY 1998, the Multi-Agency Task Force facilitated the dismantling of six drug trafficking organizations and identified five additional distribution organizations in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Oklahoma City, and Florida. Other successes for FY 1998 included a 27-count indictment against Vincente Carrillo-Fuentes, brother of ACF and key cartel player in the El Paso/Juarez corridor.

Enforcement⁸

- The City of El Paso, TX as of October 31, 1997 has 1,258 total police employees. 989 are officers and 269 are civilians.

Consequences of Use⁶

- In El Paso County during 1998 there were 380 deaths due to alcohol and drugs, 310 due to alcohol and 70 due to drugs.

Treatment⁶

- In El Paso County, 2,184 adult clients were admitted to TCADA-funded drug treatment programs during CY 1998. This constituted 6.2% of Texas's admissions. The average age was 35.3, 27.7% were married, 76.0% were male, and 38.1% use needles. In addition, 5.9% were African-American, 21.7% White, 70.7% Hispanic, 26.87% employed, 73.9% live with family, and have an average income at admission of \$6,763.

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, *West Texas HIDTA Site Fact Sheet*, 1998.

³ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1998*, October 1999

⁴ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *Substance Abuse in Texas: December 1999*, 1999.

⁵ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *1996 Survey of Substance Use on the Texas-Mexico Border and in Colonias, Preliminary Report*, December 1997.

⁶ Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, *West Texas HIDTA Threat Abstract*, 1998.

⁷ West Texas HIDTA, *FY 1998 Annual Report*, 1998.

⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1997*, Uniform Crime Reports, November 1998.

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